T68/986

Transportation

Dry Cargo Operations/ MSC Tankers

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Dry Cargo

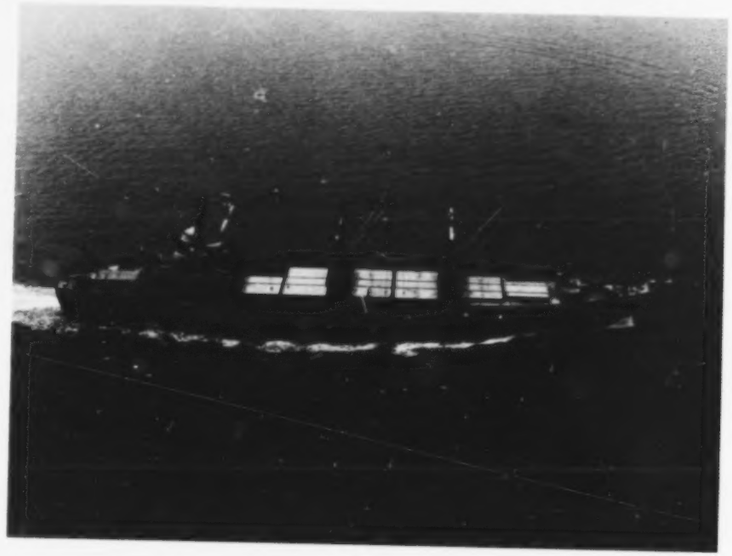
The ability to meet wartime sealift requirements is the primary reason for maintenance of an MSC cargo fleet within its Strategic Sealift Force. The command now controls about 11 deep-draft dry cargo ships. All are chartered ships. These ships constitute a mobilized fleet ready for any situation. For example, MSC's ability to evacuate 180,000 South Vietnamese in the Spring of 1975 resulted from having cargo ships in the area that were under its control.

The MSC controlled fleet handles a variety of cargo including ammunition, military vehicles, aircraft, food and clothing. To the maximum extent possible, the Defense Department—through the Navy's Military Sealift Command—relies on U.S. flag commercial shipping lines to transport military cargo. But there are cargos that the commercial carriers cannot lift where and when required, so MSC must maintain its own controlled fleet. There are also ports throughout the world—at remote Pacific Islands, for example—that commercial U.S. flag lines do not serve on their schedules.

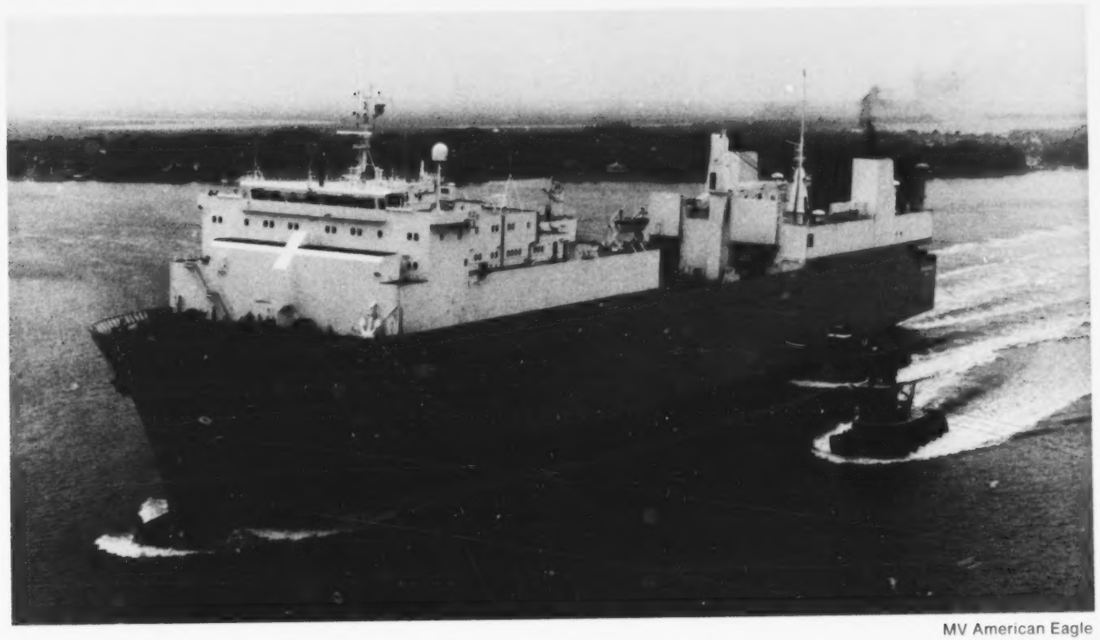
Privately owned U.S. flag cargo ships handle more than 95 per cent of MSC's cargo transportation on either a common carrier or contract carrier (including charter) basis. By law, at least 50 per cent of government cargo must be transported in privately owned U.S. flag ships and all military cargo must be carried in U.S. flag ships unless none are available at reasonable rates to meet cargo delivery requirements.

More than half of all military sea cargo is lifted by berth liners—common carrier vessels making regularly scheduled runs in the same manner that commercial airliners and trains do. MSC negotiates shipping and container agreements with U.S. flag commercial carriers for this service. The command also charters commercial ships for varying periods of time to move cargo in full shiploads, or to serve ports which have no regularly scheduled commercial service. These additional ships are part of the MSC controlled fleet.

Almost all containerized cargo is transported in U.S. flag berth liners, while slightly more than 50 per cent of breakbulk cargo is carried by MSC controlled ships. A limited number of containers are carried by breakbulk ships. For example, refrigerated vans may be loaded on a ship going to a remote location. Cargo delivered by container ships includes just about everything that can fit into standard size vans: commissary and exchange products, household goods, rations, spare parts, small arms, and military and privately owned vehicles. Cargo



SS Rapid



MV American Eagle

also is loaded in barges and lifted by barge-carrying commercial ships such as the LASH and Seabee.

The number of ships that MSC maintains in the dry cargo controlled fleet in a given year is based upon anticipated requirements. Cargo movement requirements are submitted in advance by the various shipper services—Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

The task of actually scheduling ships to carry specific loads is carried out by the four MSC area commands. They assign cargo to controlled ships, based on the actual cargo offerings received from the Military Traffic Management Command. If there is a shortage of controlled ships in a particular global area, MSC headquarters coordinates transfer of ships between areas or arranges to fill shortages through additional ship charters.

Most cargo lifts are routine. There are, however, some unusual military requirements. Special ice-strengthened cargo ships make runs to the Arctic and Antarctic with the aid of icebreakers to deliver supplies. There is only a limited period of time each year during which they can reach their destinations. In warmer climates, MSC runs bulk carriers which deliver coal originating in Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania to the Netherlands for use by U.S. forces stationed in Germany. Small MSC cargo ships also carry supplies to NASA's downrange tracking stations in the Caribbean.

Petroleum

To fulfill Defense fuel needs ashore and at sea, MSC operates a controlled fleet of some 25 tankers, most of which are privately owned vessels under long term charter to the Command. Although the primary mission of MSC's Tanker Division is the point-to-point delivery of refined petroleum products to Armed Services users throughout the world, a secondary role is the delivery of petroleum products to U.S. Navy ships at sea through refueling at sea (RAS) capability.

To transport some 11 million tons of petroleum products annually, worldwide fuel requirements are coordinated with the Defense Fuel Supply Center (DFSC) in Alexandria, Virginia. Through DFSC, annual as well as near-term requirements of petroleum needs are developed and in turn made available to MSC to provide timely yet cost-effective product delivery.

In meeting petroleum product needs around the globe, MSC develops its own fleet to lift 80-90 percent of anticipated annual requirements. When requirements for delivery exceed this supply of ships, MSC augments its capability by spot charter of commercial vessels. This utilization policy offers MSC the flexibility needed to meet fluctuating military requirements in an effective and economical manner.

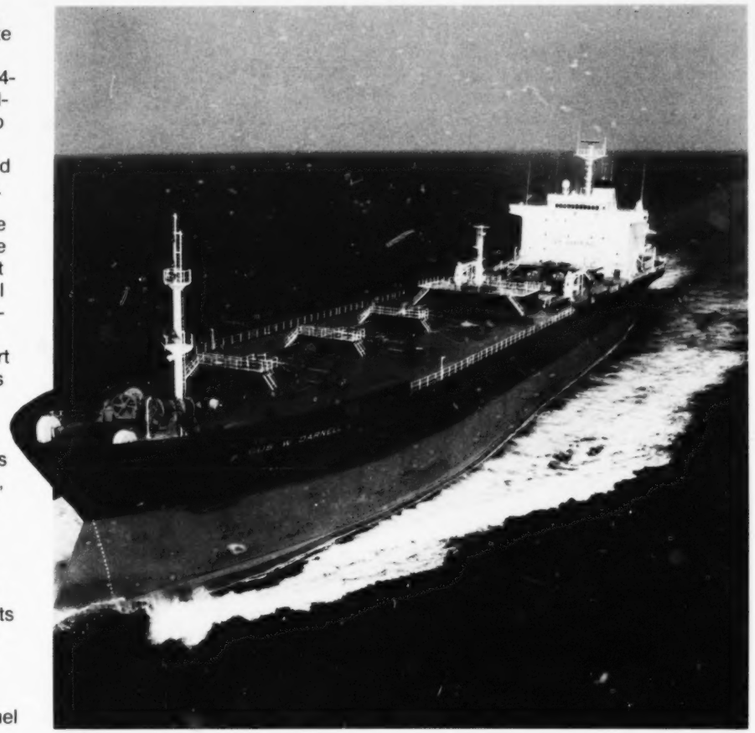
USNS Sealift Arabian Sea

Unlike dry cargo vessel operations, which are directed from subordinate area commands, MSC tankers are programmed and controlled on a 24-hour-a-day basis by the MSC Headquarters Tanker Division in order to divert vessels when immediate requirements dictate and to respond quickly to complex resupply needs.

In addition to scheduling worldwide resupply of petroleum products, the Tanker Division maintains a current data base of MSC port and terminal characteristics, monitors the performance of MSC tankers in point-to-point movement, and prepares short and long range plans and estimates of annual tanker requirements.

Current MSC tankers vary in size from 27,000 ton Sealift class tankers and 30,000 ton T-5 product tankers, operated under long term contract arrangements, to 38,000 ton chartered tankers.
Overall, the handy sized tankers in the MSC fleet can deliver relatively large volumes of petroleum products to typically shallow draft ports and terminals in the far corners of the world.

Transporting fuels such as diesel fuel and aviation and motor gasolines, MSC tankers support deployed U.S. forces from major loading areas in the Arabian Gulf, Far East, Caribbean and U.S. ports of the Gulf of Mexico.



MV Gus W. Darnell

If you are interested in seagoing employment with MSC, and you possess current Coast Guard License or Document write:

East Coast - Military Sealift Command Atlantic • Bayonne, New Jersey 07002-7622

West Coast - Military Sealift Command Pacific • Naval Supply Center • Oakland, California 94625-5010

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